



May 19, 2015

Commerce and Trade Committee
Lansing, Michigan

Re: HB 4052- Community benefits ordinances

Dear Representative,

The Michigan Environmental Council is a coalition of environmental, conservation and faith-based organizations located across the state. In our work in protecting public health and natural resources we work closely with local units of governments across the state. These elected officials are those closest to residents of their communities and are sensitive to their values and concerns.

We have significant concerns with HB 4052 which would remove critical components of local control and limit the ability of local governments to work with private companies to set the condition which define their relationship with the community. The Community Benefits Ordinances are created by elected city officials in order to address the needs and values of a particular community

Though the main focus of this bill is wages and labor issues, there are other components of community benefit agreements that are designed to mitigate the significant public health impacts that may result from a new industrial facility. In those areas with a significant concentration of industrial facilities the cumulative impacts can be substantial. We support these efforts by communities across the state to address these impacts.

Those who are elected to serve that community know best what kind of community that they want to be, and that can include setting certain minimum thresholds for governmental contracts. These are the three areas we have identified as significant concerns with HB 4052:

- It eliminates the potential for employee sick day requirements to be included in a contract. Unlike other employment benefits, sick days are necessary to protect the public health and welfare. Working through illness can spread the disease through a workplace, decreasing overall productivity. It encourages people to work at the detriment of their health, greatly limiting their ability to move up through economic opportunity.
- The bill as is would also remove employment discrimination protections provided to LGBTQ community by 37 municipalities in Michigan.
- The bill would disproportionately affect those areas that are most affected by public health and environmental issues facing our state. It bars a community from

addressing these concerns through community benefit agreements to provide employees with wages to compensate for working in less than ideal conditions. These agreements and ordinances can help guide cities to ensure protection of the most vulnerable among us.

The Michigan Environmental Council opposes HB 4052 unless these issues can be addressed.



James Clift, Policy Director
Michigan Environmental Council